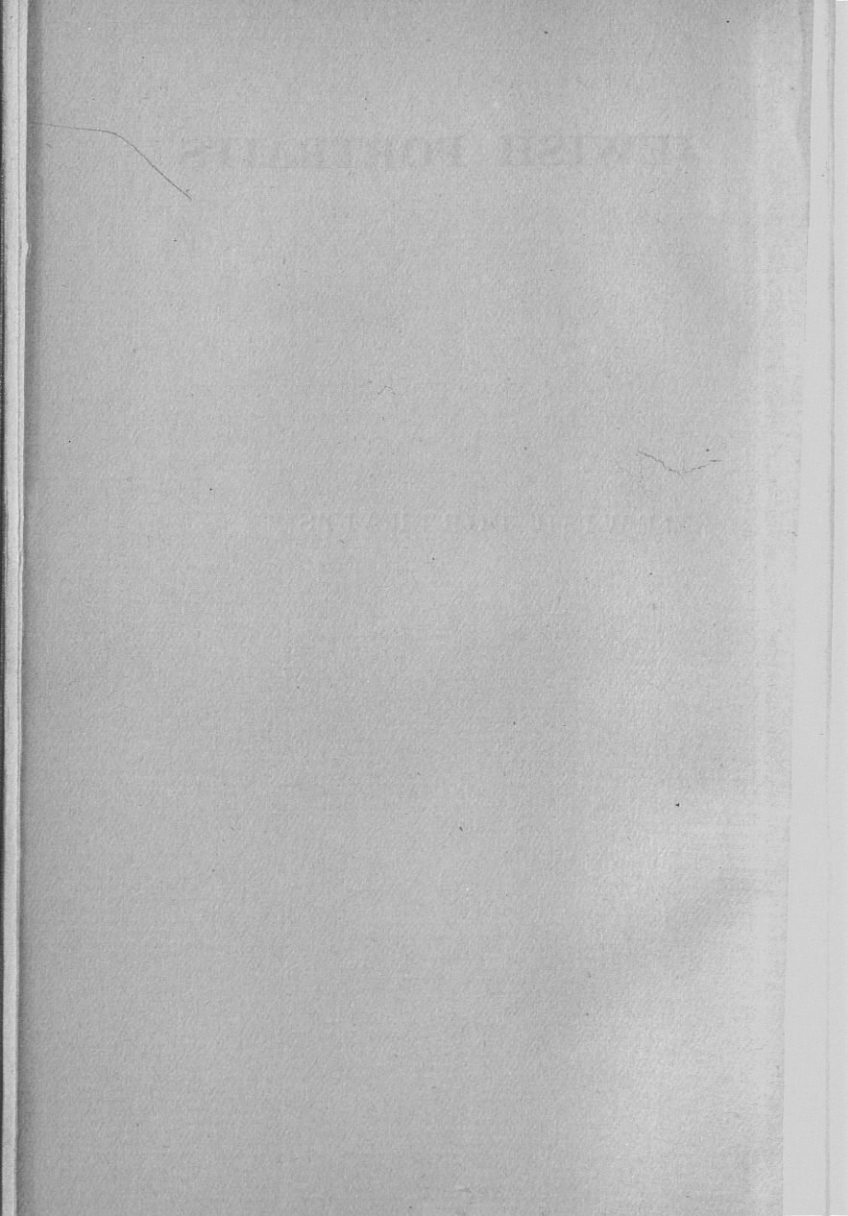


JEWISH PORTRAITS



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BY
LADY MAGNUS

AUTHOR OF
'OUTLINES OF JEWISH HISTORY,' 'ABOUT THE JEWS
SINCE BIBLE TIMES,' ETC.

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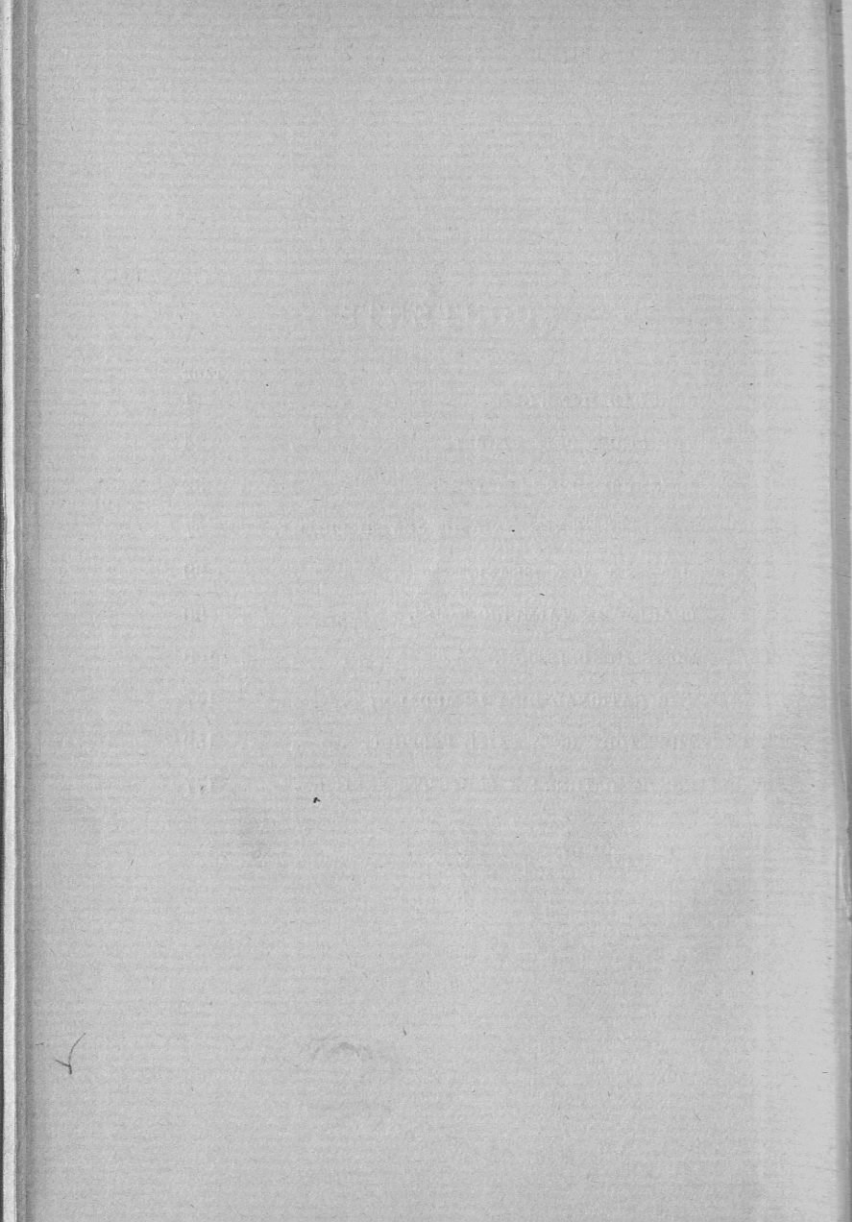
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JEWISH PORTRAITS

JEHUDAH HALEVI

PHYSICIAN AND POET

In the far-off days, when religion was not a habit, but an emotion, there lived a little-known poet who solved the pathetic puzzle of how to sing the Lord's song in a strange land. Minor poets of the period in plenty had essayed a like task, leaving a literature the very headings of which are strange to uninstructed ears. '*Piyutim*,' '*Selichoth*': what meaning do these words convey to most of us? And yet they stand for songs of exile, sung by patient generations of men who tell a monotonous tale of mournful times—

'When ancient griefs
Are closely veiled
In recent shrouds,'

as one of the anonymous host expresses it. For the writers were of the race of the traditional Sweet Singer, and their lot was

cast in those picturesquely disappointing Middle Ages, too close to the chivalry of the time to appreciate its charm. One pictures these comparatively cultured pariahs, these gaberdined, degenerate descendants of seers and prophets, looking out from their ghettos on a world which, for all the stir and bustle of barbaric life, was to them as desolate and as bare of promise of safe resting-place as when the waters covered it, and only the tops of the mountains appeared. One sees them now as victims, and now as spectators, but never as actors in that strange show, yet always, we fancy, realising the barbarism, and with that undoubting faith of theirs in the ultimate dawning of a perfect day, seeming to regard the long reign of brute force, of priestcraft, and of ignorance as phases of misrule, which, like unto manifold others, should pass whilst they would endure.

‘A race that has been tested
And tried through fire and water,
Is surely prized by Thee,’

cries out a typical bard, with, perhaps, a too-conscious tone of martyrdom, and a decided tendency to clutch at the halo. The attitude is altogether a trifle arrogant and stolid and defiant to superficial criticism, but yet one for which a deeper insight will find excuses. The

complacency is not quite self-complacency, the pride is impersonal, and so, though provoking, is pathetic too. Something of the old longing which, with a sort of satisfied negation, claimed 'honour and glory,' 'not unto us,' but unto 'the Name,' seems to find expression again in the unrhymed and often unrhythmical compositions of these patient poets of the *Selicha*. Their poetry, perhaps, goes some way towards explaining their patience, for, undoubtedly, there is no doggedness like that of men who at will, and by virtue of their own thoughts, can soar above circumstances and surroundings. 'Vulgar minds,' says a last-century poet, truly enough, 'refuse or crouch beneath their load,' and inevitably such will collapse under a pressure which the cultivated will endure, and 'bear without repining.' The ills to which flesh is heir will generally be best and most bravely borne by those to whom the flesh is not all in all; as witness Heine, whose voice rose at its sweetest, year after year, from his mattress grave. That there never was a time in all their history when the lusts of the flesh were a whole and satisfying ambition to the Jew, or when the needs of the body bounded his desires, may account in some degree for that marvellous capacity for suffering which the race has evinced.

These rugged *Piyutim*, for over a thousand years, come in from most parts of the continent of Europe as a running commentary on its laws, suggesting a new reading for the old significant connection between a country's lays and its legislation, and supplying an illustration to Charles Kingsley's dictum, that 'the literature of a nation is its autobiography.' *Selicha* (from the Hebrew, סליחה) means literally forgiveness, and to forgive and to be forgiven is the burden and the refrain of most of the so-called Penitential Poems (*Selichoth*), whose theme is of sorrows and persecutions past telling, almost past praying about. *Piyut* (derived from the Greek ποιητής) in early Jewish writings stood for the poet himself, and later on it was applied as a generic name for his compositions. From the second to the eighth century there is decidedly more suggestion of martyrdom than of minstrelsy in these often unsigned and always unsingable sonnets of the synagogue, and especially about the contributions from France, and subsequently from Germany, to the liturgical literature of the Middle Ages, there is a far too prevailing note of the swan's song for cheerful reading. Happier in their circumstances than the rest of their European co-religionists, the Spanish writers sing, for the most part, in clearer and higher strains, and it is they who

towards the close of the tenth century, first add something of the grace and charm of metrical versification to the hitherto crude and rough style of composition which had sufficed. Even about the prose of these Spanish authors there is many a light and happy touch, and, not unseldom, in the voluminous and somewhat verbose literature, we come across a short story (*midrash*) or a pithy saying, with salt enough of wit or of pathos about it to make its preservation through the ages quite comprehensible.

Hep, Hep, was the dominant note in the European concert, when at the beginning of the twelfth century our poet was born. France, Italy, Germany, Bohemia, and Greece had each been, at different times within the hundred years which had just closed, the scene of terrible persecutions. In Spain alone, under the mild sway of the Ommeyade Kaliphs, there had been a tolerably long entr'acte in the 'fifteen hundred year tragedy' that the Jewish race was enacting, and there, in old Castille, whilst Alfonso VI. was king, Jehudah Halevi passed his childhood. Although in 1085 Alfonso was already presiding over an important confederation of Catholic States, yet at the beginning of the twelfth century the Arab supremacy in Spain was still comparatively unshaken, and

its influence, social and political, over its Jewish subjects was still paramount. Perhaps the one direction in which that impressionable race was least perceptibly affected by its Arab experiences was in its literature. And remembering how very distinctly in the elder days of art the influence of Greek thought is traceable in Jewish philosophy, it is strange to note with these authors of the Middle Ages, who write as readily in Arabic as in Hebrew, that, though the hand is the hand of Esau, the voice remains unmistakably the voice of Jacob. Munk dwells on this remarkable distinction in the poetry of the period, and with some natural preference perhaps, strives to account for it in the wide divergence of the Hebrew and Arabic sources of inspiration. The poetry of the Jews he roundly declares to be universal, and that of the Arabs egotistic in its tendency; the sons of the desert finding subjects for their Muse in traditions of national glory and in dreams of material delight, whilst the descendants of prophets turn to the records of their own ancestry, and find their themes in remorseful memories, and in unselfish and unsensual hopes. With the Jewish poet, past and future are alike uncoloured by personal desire, and even the sins and sufferings of his race he enshrines in song. If it be good, as a

modern writer has declared it to be, that a nation should commemorate its defeats, certainly no race has ever been richer in such subjects, or has shown itself more willing, in ritual and rhyme, to take advantage of them.

Whilst the leaders of society, the licentious crusader and the celibate monk, were stumbling so sorely in the shadow of the Cross, and whilst the rank and file throughout Europe were steeped in deepest gloom of densest ignorance and superstition, the lamp of learning, handed down from generation to generation of despised Jews, was still being carefully trimmed, and was burning at its brightest among the little knot of philosophers and poets in Spain. Alcharisi, the commentator and critic of the circle, gives, for his age, a curiously high standard of the qualifications essential to the sometimes lightly bestowed title of author. 'A poet,' he says, '(1) must be perfect in metre; (2) his language of classic purity; (3) the subject of his poem worthy of the poet's best skill, and calculated to instruct and to elevate mankind; (4) his style must be full of "lucidity" and free from every obscure or foreign expression; (5) he must never sacrifice sense to sound; (6) he must add infinite care and patience to his gift of genius, never submitting crude work to the world;

and (7) lastly, he must neither parade all he knows nor offer the winnowings of his harvest.'

These seem sufficiently severe conditions even to nineteenth-century judgment, but Jehudah Halevi, say his admirers and even his contemporaries, fulfilled them all.

That a man should be judged by his peers gives a promise of sound and honest testimony, and if such judgment be accepted as final, then does Halevi hold high rank indeed among men and poets. One of the first things that strike an intruder into this old-world literary circle is the curious absence of those small rivalries and jealousies which we of other times and manners look instinctively to find. Such records as remain to us make certainly less amusing reading than some later biographies and autobiographies afford, but, on the other hand, it has a unique interest of its own, to come upon authentic traces of such susceptible beings as authors, all living in the same set and with a limited range both of subjects and of readers, who yet live together in harmony, and interchange sonnets and epigrams curiously free from every suggestion of envy, hatred, or uncharitableness. There is, in truth, a wonderful freshness of sentiment about these gentle old scholars. They say pretty things

to and of each other in almost school-girl fashion. 'I pitch my tent in thy heart,' exclaims one as he sets out on a journey. More poetically Halevi expresses a similar sentiment to a friend of his (Ibn Giat):

'If to the clouds thy boldness wings its flight,
Within our hearts, thou ne'er art out of sight.'

Writes another (Moses Aben Ezra), and he was a philosopher and grammarian to boot, one not to be lightly suspected of sentimentality, 'Our hearts were as one: now parted from thee, my heart is divided into two.' Halevi was the absent friend in this instance, and he begins his response as warmly:—

'How can I rest when we are absent one from
another?
Were it not for the glad hope of thy return
The day which tore thee from me
Would tear me from all the world.'

Or the note changes: some disappointment or disillusion is hinted at, and under its influence our tender-hearted poet complains to this same sympathetic correspondent, 'I was asked, Hast thou sown the seed of friendship? My answer was, Alas, I did, but the seed did not thrive.'

It is altogether the strangest, soberest little picture of sweetness and light, showing beneath the gaudy, tawdry phantasmagoria of

the age. Rub away the paint and varnish from the hurrying host of crusaders, from the confused crowd of dreary, deluded rabble, and there they stand like a 'restored' group, these tuneful, unworldly sages, 'toiling, rejoicing, sorrowing,' with Jehudah Halevi, poet and physician, as central figure. For, loyal to the impulse which in times long past had turned Akiba into a herdsman and had induced Hillel in his youth and poverty to 'hire himself out wherever he could find a job,'¹ which, in the time to come, was to make of Maimonides a diamond-cutter, and of Spinoza an optician, Halevi compounded simples as conscientiously as he composed sonnets, and was more of doctor than of poet by profession. He was true to those traditions and instincts of his race, which, through all the ages, had recognised the dignity of labour and had inclined to use literature as a staff rather than as a crutch. His prescriptions were probably such as the Pharmacopœia of to-day might hardly approve, and the spirit in which he prescribed, one must own, is perhaps also a little out of date. Here is a grace just before physic which brings to one's mind the advice given by a famous divine of the muscular Christianity school to his young friend at Oxford, 'Work hard—as for your degree, leave it to God.'

¹ Talmud, Yoma 356.

'God grant that I may rise again,
Nor perish by Thine anger slain.
This draught that I myself combine,
What is it? Only Thou dost know
If well or ill, if swift or slow,
Its parts shall work upon my pain.
Ay, of these things, alone is Thine
The knowledge. All my faith I place,
Not in my craft, but in Thy grace.'¹ (1)

Halevi's character, however, was far enough removed from that which an old author has defined as 'pious and painefull.' He 'entered the courts with gladness': his religion being of a healthy, happy, natural sort, free from all affectations, and with no taint either of worldliness or of other-worldliness to be discerned in it. Perhaps our poet was not entirely without that comfortable consciousness of his own powers and capabilities which, in weaker natures, turns its seamy side to us as conceit, nor altogether free from that impatience of 'fools' which seems to be another of the temptations of the gifted. This rather ill-tempered little extract which we are honest enough to append appears to indicate as much:—

'Lo ! my light has pierced to the dark abyss,
I have brought forth gems from the gloomy mine ;

¹ The extracts marked thus (1) were done into verse from the German of Geiger, by the late Amy Levy.

Now the fools would see them ! I ask you this :
Shall I fling my pearls down before the swine ?
From the gathered cloud shall the raindrops flow
To the barren land where no fruit can grow ?' (1)

The little grumble is characteristic, but in actual fact no land was 'barren' to his hopeful, sunny temperament. In the 'morning he sowed his seed, and in the evening he withheld not his hand,' and from his 'gathered clouds,' the raindrops fell rainbow-tinted. The love songs, which a trustworthy edition tells us were written to his wife, are quite as beautiful in their very different way as an impassioned elegy he wrote when death claimed his friend, Aben Ezra, or as the famous ode he composed on Jerusalem. Halevi wrote prose too, and a bulky volume in Arabic is in existence, which sets forth the history of a certain Bulan, king of the Khozars, who reigned, the antiquarians agree, about the beginning of the eighth century, over a territory situate on the shores of the Caspian Sea. This Bulan would seem to have been of a hesitating, if not of a sceptical, turn of mind in religious matters. Honestly anxious to be correct in his opinions, his anxiety becomes intensified by means of a vision, and he finally summons representative followers of Moses, of Jesus, and of Mahomet, to discuss in his presence the tenets of their masters. These chosen doctors of divinity

argue at great length, and the Jewish Rabbi is said to have best succeeded in satisfying the anxious scruples of the king. The same authorities tell us that Bulan became an earnest convert to Judaism, and commenced in his own person a Jewish dynasty which endured for more than two centuries. Over these more or less historic facts Halevi casts the glamour of his genius, and makes, at any rate, a very readable story out of them, which incidentally throws some valuable side-lights on his own way of regarding things. Unluckily, side-lights are all we possess, in place of the electric illuminating fashion of the day. Those copious details, which our grandchildren seem likely to inherit concerning all and sundry of this generation, are wholly wanting to us, the earlier heirs of time. Of Halevi, as of greater poets, who have lived even nearer to our own age, history speaks neither loudly nor in chorus. Yet, for our consolation, there is the reflection that the various and varying records of 'Thomas's ideal John: never the real John, nor John's John, but often very unlike either,' may, in truth, help us but little to a right comprehension of the 'real John, known only to His Maker.' Once get at a man's ideals, it has been well said, and the rest is easy. And thus though our facts are but few and fragmentary concerning the man of whom

one admirer quaintly says that, 'created in the image of God' could in his case stand for literal description, yet may we, by means of his ideals, arrive perhaps at a juster conception of Halevi's charming personality than did we possess the very pen with which he wrote and the desk at which he sat and the minutest and most authentic particulars as to his wont of using both.

His ideal of religion was expressed in every practical detail of daily life.

'When I remove from Thee, O God,
I die whilst I live; but when
I cleave to Thee, I live in death.'¹

These three lines indicate the sentiment of Judaism, and might almost serve as sufficient sample of Halevi's simple creed, for, truth to tell, the religion of the Jews does not concern itself greatly with the ideal, being of a practical rather than of an emotional sort, rigid as to practice, but tolerant over theories, and inquiring less as to a man's belief than as to his conduct. Work—steady, cheerful, untiring work—was perhaps Halevi's favourite form of praise. Still, being a poet, he sings, and, like the birds, in divers strains, with happy, unconscious effort. Only 'For Thy songs, O God!' he cries, 'my heart is a harp'; and truly

¹ From Atonement Service.

enough, in some of these ancient Hebrew hymns, the stately intensity of which it is impossible to reproduce, we seem to hear clearly the human strings vibrate. The truest faith, the most living hope, the widest charity, is breathed forth in them ; and they have naturally been enshrined by his fellow-believers in the most sacred parts of their liturgy, quotations from which would here obviously be out of place. Some dozen lines only shall be given, and these chosen in illustration of the universality of the Jewish hope. 'Where can I find Thee, O God?' the poet questions ; and there is wonderfully little suggestion of reserved places about the answer :—

'Lord ! where art Thou to be found ?
Hidden and high is Thy home.
And where shall we find Thee not ?
Thy glory fills the world.
Thou art found in my heart,
And at the uttermost ends of the earth.
A refuge for the near,
For the far, a trust.

'The universe cannot contain Thee ;
How then a temple's shrine ?
Though Thou art raised above men
On Thy high and lofty throne,
Yet art Thou near unto them
In their spirit and in their flesh.

Who can say he has not seen Thee?
When lo ! the heavens and their host
Tell of Thy fear, in silent testimony.

‘I sought to draw near to Thee.
With my whole heart I sought Thee.
And when I went out to meet Thee,
To meet me, Thou wast ready on the road.
In the wonders of Thy might
And in Thy holiness I have beheld Thee.
Who is there that should not fear Thee?
The yoke of Thy kingdom is for ever and for all,
Who is there that should not call upon Thee?
Thou givest unto all their food.’

Concerning Halevi's ideal of love and marriage we may speak at greater length; and on these subjects one may remark that our poet's ideal was less individual than national. Mixing intimately among men who, as a matter of course, bestowed their fickle favours on several wives, and whose poetic notion of matrimony—on the prosaic we will not touch—was a houri-peopled Paradise, it is perhaps to the credit of the Jews that this was one of the Arabian customs which, with all their susceptibility, they were very slow to adopt. Halevi, as is the general faithful fashion of his race, all his life long loved one only, and clave to her—a ‘dove of rarest worth, and sweet exceedingly,’ as in one of his poems he declares her to be. The test of

poetry, Goethe somewhere says, is the substance which remains when the poetry is reduced to prose. When the poetry has been yet further reduced by successive processes of translation, the test becomes severe. We fancy, though, that there is still some considerable residuum about Halevi's songs to his old-fashioned love—his Ophrah, as he calls her in some of them. Here is one when they are likely to be parted for a while :—

‘So we must be divided ; sweetest, stay,
Once more, mine eyes would seek thy glance’s
light.

At night I shall recall thee : Thou, I pray,
Be mindful of the days of our delight.
Come to me in my dreams, I ask of thee,
And even in my dreams be gentle unto me.

‘If thou shouldst send me greeting in the grave,
The cold breath of the grave itself were sweet ;
Oh, take my life, my life, ’tis all I have,
If it should make thee live, I do entreat.
I think that I shall hear when I am dead,
The rustle of thy gown, thy footsteps overhead.’ (1)

And another, which reads like a marriage hymn :—

‘A dove of rarest worth
And sweet exceedingly ;
Alas, why does she turn
And fly so far from me?

In my fond heart a tent,
Should aye preparèd be.
My poor heart she has caught
With magic spells and wiles.
I do not sigh for gold,
But for her mouth that smiles ;
Her hue it is so bright,
She half makes blind my sight,

.

The day at last is here
Fill'd full of love's sweet fire ;
The twain shall soon be one,
Shall stay their fond desire.
Ah ! would my tribe could chance
On such deliverance.' (1)

On a first reading, these last two lines strike one as oddly out of place in a love poem. But as we look again, they seem to suggest, that in a nature so full and wholesome as Halevi's, love did not lead to a selfish forgetfulness, nor marriage mean a joy which could hold by its side no care for others. Rather to prove that love at its best does not narrow the sympathies, but makes them widen and broaden out to enfold the less fortunate under its happy, brooding wings. And though at the crowning moment of his life Halevi could spare a tender thought for his 'tribe,' with very little right could the foolish, favourite epithet of 'tribalism' be flung at him, and with even less of justice at his race. In truth,

they were 'patriots' in the sorriest, sincerest sense—this dispossessed people, who owned not an inch of the lands wherein they wandered, from the east unto the west. It is prejudice or ignorance maybe, but certainly it is not history, which sees the Jews as any but the faithfulest of citizens to their adopted States; faithful, indeed, often to the extent of forgetting, save in set and prayerful phrases, the lost land of their fathers. Here is a typical national song of the twelfth century, in which no faintest echo of regret or of longing for other glories, other shrines, can be discerned :—

'I found that words could ne'er express
The half of all its loveliness;
From place to place I wander'd wide,
With amorous sight unsatisfied,
Till last I reach'd all cities' queen,
Tolaitola¹ the fairest seen.

Her palaces that show so bright
In splendour, shamed the starry height,
Whilst temples in their glorious sheen
Rivall'd the glories that had been;
With earnest reverent spirit there,
The pious soul breathes forth its prayer.'

The 'earnest reverent spirit' may be a little out of drawing now, but that 'fairest

¹ Hebrew for Toledo.

city seen' of the Spanish poet,¹ might well stand for the London or Paris of to-day in the well-satisfied, cosmopolitan affections of an ordinary Englishman or Frenchman of the Jewish faith. And which of us may blame this adaptability, this comfortable inconstancy of content? Widows and widowers remarry, and childless folks, it is said, grow quite foolishly fond of adopted kin. With practical people the past is past, and to the prosperous nothing comes more easy than forgetting. After all—

'What can you do with people when they are dead?
But if you are pious, sing a hymn and go;
Or, if you are tender, heave a sigh and go,
But go by all means, and permit the grass
To keep its green fend 'twixt them and you.'²

In the long centuries since Jerusalem fell there has been time and to spare for the green grass to wither into dusty weeds above those desolate dead whose 'place knows them no more.' That Halevi with his 'poetic heart,' which is a something different from the most metrical of poetic imaginations, cherished a closer ideal of patriotism than some of his brethren may not be denied. 'Israel among the nations,' he writes, 'is as the heart among the limbs.' He was the loyalest of Spanish

¹ Alcharisi.

² E. B. Browning.

subjects, yet Jerusalem was ever to him, in sober fact, 'the city of the world.'

In these learned latter days, the tiniest crumbs of tradition have been so eagerly pounced upon by historians to analyse and argue over, that we are almost left in doubt whether the very A B C of our own history may still be writ in old English characters. The process which has bereft the bogy uncle of our youthful belief of his hump, and all but transformed the Bluebeard of the British throne into a model monarch, has not spared to set its puzzling impress on the few details which have come down to us concerning Halevi. Whether the love-poems, some eight hundred in number, were all written to his wife, is now questioned; whether 1086 or 1105 is the date of his birth, and if Toledo or Old Castille be his birthplace, is contested. Whether he came to a peaceful end, or was murdered by wandering Arabs, is left doubtful, since both the year of his death¹ and the manner of it are stated in different ways by different authorities, among whom it is hard to choose. Whether, indeed, he ever visited the Holy City, whether he beheld it with 'actual sight or sight of faith,' is greatly and gravely debated; but amidst all this bewildering dust of doubt that the researches of wise

¹ No authority gives it later than 1140.

commentators have raised, the central fact of his life is left to us undisputed. The realities they meddle with, but the ideals, happily, they leave to us undimmed. All at least agree, that 'she whom the Rabbi loved was a poor woe-begone darling, a moving picture of desolation, and her name was Jerusalem.' There is a consensus of opinion among the critics that this often-quoted saying of Heine's was only a poetical way of putting a literal and undoubted truth. On this subject, indeed, our poet has only to speak for himself.

'Oh ! city of the world, most chastely fair ;
In the far west, behold I sigh for thee.
And in my yearning love I do bethink me,
Of bygone ages ; of thy ruined fane,
Thy vanish'd splendour of a vanish'd day.
Oh ! had I eagles' wings I'd fly to thee,
And with my falling tears make moist thine earth.
I long for thee ; what though indeed thy kings
Have passed for ever ; that where once uprose
Sweet balsam-trees the serpent makes his nest.
O that I might embrace thy dust, the sod
Were sweet as honey to my fond desire !' (1)

Fifty translations cannot spoil the true ring in such fervid words as these. And in a world so sadly full of 'fond desires,' destined to remain for ever unfulfilled, it is pleasant to know that Halevi accomplished his. He unquestionably travelled to Palestine ; whether

his steps were stayed short of Jerusalem we know not, but he undoubtedly reached the shores, and breathed 'the air of that land which makes men wise,' as in loving hyperbole a more primitive patriot¹ expresses it.

And seeing how that 'the Lord God doth like a printer who setteth the letters backward,'² there is small cause, perchance, for grieving in that the breath our poet drew in the land of his dreams was the breath not of life but of death.

¹ Rabbi Seira.

² 'The Lord God doth like a printer who setteth the letters backward; we see and feel well His setting, but the print we shall see yonder in the life to come.'—Luther's *Table Talk*.

THE STORY OF A STREET

To the ear and eye that can find sermons in stones, streets, one would fancy, must be brimful of suggestive stories. There might be differences of course. From a stone of the polished pebble variety, for instance, one could only predict smooth platitudes, and the romance in a block of regulation stucco would possibly turn out a trifle prosaic. But the right stone and the right street will always have an eloquence of their own for the right listener or lounger, and certain crumbling old tenements which were carted away as rubbish some few years ago in Frankfort must have been rarely gifted in this line. 'Words of fire,' and 'written in blood,' would, in truth, have no parabolic meaning, if the stones of that ancient *Judengasse* suddenly took to story-telling. A long record of sorrow, and wrong, and squalid romance, would be unfolded, and, inasmuch as the sorrows have been healed and the wrongs have been righted, it may not be uninteresting to look for a moment at the picturesque truths that

lie hidden under that squalid romance, which, like a mist, hung for centuries over the Jews' quarter.

The very first authentic record of the presence of Jews in Frankfort comes to us in the account of a massacre of some hundred and eighty of them in 1241. This persecution was probably epidemic rather than indigenous in its nature, its germ distinctly traceable to those conscientious and comprehensive attempts of Louis the Saint, in the preceding year, to stamp out Judaism in his dominions. At any rate, for German Jews, an era of protection began under Frederick Barbarossa, and the Frankfort Jews among the rest, during the next hundred years, enjoyed the 'no history' which to the Jewish nation, pre-eminently amongst all others, must have been synonymous with happiness. But the story begins again about the middle of the fourteenth century when the Black Plague raged, and sanitary inspection, old style, took the form of declaring the wells to be poisoned, and of advising the burning and plunder of Jews by way of antidote. Jews were prolific, their hoards portable, their houses slightly built, so the burnings and the massacres and the liftings become intermittent and a little difficult to localise, till about the year 1430, when Frederick III.,

egged on by his clergy, made an order for all Jews in Frankfort to reside out of sight and sound of the holy Cathedral. A site just without the ancient walls of the town, and belonging to the council, was allotted to them, and here, at their own expense, the Jews built their *Judengasse*.

The street contained originally some hundred and ninety-six houses, and iron-sheeted gates, kept fast closed on Sundays and saint days, grew gradually to be barred from inside as well as outside on the Ghetto. The pleasures and the hopes which Jews might not share they came by slow degrees to hate and to despise, and the men with the yellow badges on their garments learnt to cringe and stoop under their load, and the dark-eyed women with the blue stripes to their veils lifted them only to look upon their children. Undeniably, by every outward test, the poor pariahs of the Ghetto were degenerate, and their sad and sordid lives must have looked both repellent and unpicturesque to the passer-by. But it may be doubted whether the degeneracy went much deeper than the costume. If the passer-by had passed in to one of these gabled dwellings, when the degrading gaberdine and the disfiguring veil were thrown aside, he would have come upon an interior of home life which would have

struck him as strangely incongruous with the surroundings. Amid all the wretched physical squalor of the street he would have found little mental and less spiritual destitution. If the law of the land bid Jews shrink before men, the law of the Book bid them rejoice before God. Both laws they obeyed to the letter. Beating vainly at closed doors, they learnt to speak to the world with bated breath and whispered humbleness, but 'His courts' they entered, as it was commanded them, 'with thanksgiving,' and 'joyfully' sang hymns to Him. And the 'courts' came to be comprehensive of application, and the 'hymns' to include much literature. There was always a vivid domestic side to the religion of the Jews, and the alchemy of home life went far to turn the dross of the Ghetto into gold. Their Sabbath, in the picturesque phrase of their prayer-book, was 'a bride,' and her welcome, week by week, was of a right bridal sort. White cloths were spread and lamps lit in her honour. The shabbiest dwellings put on something of a festive air, and for '*Shobbus*' the poorest *haus-frau* would manage to have ready at least one extra dish and several best and bright-coloured garments for her family. On the seventh day and on holy days the slouching pedlar and hawker fathers, with their packs

cast off, were priests and teachers too, and every day the Ghetto children, for all their starved and stunted growth, had unlimited diet from the *Judengasse* stores of family affection and free schooling. They were probably, however, at no time very numerous, these Ghetto babies, for up to a quite comparatively recent date (1832) Jewish love-affairs were strictly under State control, and only fifteen couples a year were allowed to marry.

Ludwig Börne, or Löb Baruch as he is registered in the Frankfort synagogue (1786), was a result of one of these eagerly sought privileges, and it is easy to see how he came to write, 'Because I was born a slave I understand liberty; my birthplace was no longer than the *Judengasse*, and beyond its locked gates a foreign country began for me. Now, no town, no district, no province can content me. I can rest only with all Germany for my fatherland.' An eloquent expression enough of the repressed patriotism which was, perforce, inarticulate for centuries in the *Judengasse* of Frankfort.

Prison as the street must have seemed to its tenants, there was at least one occasion when its gates had the charms rather than the defects appertaining to bolts and bars. In 1498, a harassed, ragged little crowd from Nuremberg fled from their persecutors to

find in our Frankfort *Judengasse* a safe city of refuge, and for a century or more the Imperial coat-of-arms was gratefully emblazoned on the Ghetto gates as a sign to the outer world that the Frankfort Jews, though imprisoned, were protected. Yet we may fairly doubt if the feeling of security could have been much more than skin-deep, since in 1711, when nearly the whole of the street was burnt down, we find that some of the poor souls were so afraid of insult and plunder, that many refused to open their doors to would-be rescuers, and so, to prevent being pillaged, perished in the flames. An oddly pathetic prose version of the famous Ingoldsby martyr, who 'could stand dying, but who couldn't stand pinching.'

When, in 1808, Napoleon made Frankfort the capital of his new grand duchy, the Ghetto gates were demolished, and many vexatious restrictions were repealed. Such new hopes, however, as the Frankfort Jews may have begun to indulge, fell with Napoleon's downfall in 1815. Civil and political disabilities were revived, and it was not till 1854 that the last of these were erased from the statute-book.

The one house in that sad old street, the stirring sermons in whose stones might be 'good in everything,' would be No. 148, the little low-browed dwelling with the sign of

the Rose and Star—a veritable Rose of Dawn it has proved—which was purchased more than a hundred years ago [in 1780] by Meyer Amschel Rothschild, the founder of the great Rothschild house. Every one knows the fairy-like story of that old house; how Meyer Amschel, intended by his parents to be a rabbi, as many of his ancestors had been before him, chose for himself a different way of helping his fellow-men; how he went into commerce, and made commerce, even in the Ghetto, dignified and honourable, as he would have made chimney-sweeping if he had adopted it; how he became agent to the Landgrave of Hesse-Cassel, how faithfully he discharged his stewardship, and how his money took to itself snowball properties, and changed the tiny *Judengasse* tenement into gorgeous mansions. And the old stones would tell, too, of how faithful were the old merchant prince and the wife of his youth to early associations; how sons and daughters grew up and married, and moved to more aristocratic neighbourhoods, but how Meyer Amschel and his old wife clung to the shabby old home in the Ghetto, and lived there all their lives, and till she died, nearly fifty years ago.¹ The very

¹ Gütle Rothschild, née Schnapper, died May 7, 1849. Her eldest son, Amschel Meyer Rothschild, was born June 12, 1773, died December 6, 1855.

iron bars of those windows would speak if they could, saying never a word of their old bad uses, but telling only how kind and wrinkled hands were stretched out through them day by day, and year after year, dealing out bread to the hungry. No. 148 could certainly tell the prettiest story in all the street, and preach the most suggestive line in all the sermons carted away with those stones of the Frankfort *Judengasse*. And it would be a story with a sequel. For when all the other sad old houses were demolished, the walls and rafters of No. 148 were carefully collected and numbered, and for a while reverently laid aside. And now, re-erected, the house stands close by its old site, serving as the centre or depôt for the dispensing of the Rothschild charities in Frankfort. Fanciful folks might almost be tempted to believe that stones with such experiences would be sufficiently sentient to rejoice at the pretty sentiment which refused to let them perish, and which, regarding them as relics, built them up afresh, and consecrated them to new and noble uses.

HEINRICH HEINE: A PLEA

‘That blackguard Heine.’—CARLYLE.

“‘Who was Heine?’” A wicked man.’

CHARLES KINGSLEY.

THERE are some persons, some places, some things, which fall all too easily into ready-made definitions. Labels lie temptingly to hand, and specimens get duly docketed—‘rich as a Jew,’ perhaps, or ‘happy as a king’—with a promptitude and a precision which is not a trifle provoking to people of a nicely discriminative turn of mind. The amiable optimism which insists on an inseparable union between a Jew and his money, and discerns an alliterative link between kings and contentment, or makes now and again a monopoly of the virtues by labelling them ‘Christian,’ has, we suspect, a good deal to do with the manufacture of debatable definitions, and the ready fitting of slop-made judgments. Scores of such shallow platitudes occur to one’s memory, some mischievous, some monotonous, some simply meaningless, and many of the most complacent have been tacked on to the

telling of a life-story, brimful of contradictions, and running counter to most of the conventionalities. The story of one who was a Jew, and poor; a convert, without the zeal; a model of resignation, and yet no Christian; a poet, born under sternest conditions of prose, and with sad claims, by right of race, to the scorn of scorn and hate of hate, which we have been told is exclusively a poet's appanage—surely a story hardly susceptible of being summed up in an epithet. It is a life which has been told often, in many languages, and in much detail; this small sketch will glance only at such portions of it as seem to suggest the clue to a juster reading and a kindlier conclusion.

It was in the last month of the last year of the eighteenth century, in the little town of Düsseldorf in South Germany, that their eldest son Heinrich, or Harry as he seems to have been called in the family circle, was born unto Samson Heine, dealer in cloth, and Betty his wife. That eighteenth century had been but a dreary one for the Jews of Europe. It set in darkness on Heine's cradle, and on his 'mattress grave,' some fifty years later, the dawn of nineteenth century civilisation, for them, had scarcely broken. 'The heaviest burden that men can lay upon us,' wrote Spinoza, 'is not that they persecute us with

their hatred and scorn, but it is by the planting of hatred and scorn in our souls. That is what does not let us breathe freely or see clearly.' This subtlest effect of the poison of persecution seemed to have entered the Jewish system. Warned off from the high-roads of life, and shunned for shambling along its bye-paths, the banned and persecuted race, looking out on the world from their ghettos, had grown to see most things in false perspective. Self loomed large on their blank horizon, and gold shone more golden in the gloom. God the Father, whose service demanded such daily sacrifice, had lost something of that divinest attribute; men, our brothers, could the words have borne any but a 'tribal' sound? Still, in those dim, dream-peopled ghettos, where visions of the absent, the distant, and the past must have come to further perplex and confuse the present, one actuality seems to have been grasped among the shadows, one ideal attained amid all the grim realities of that most miserable time. Home life and family affection had a sacredness for the worst of these poor sordid Jews in a sense which, to the best of those sottish little German potentates who so conscientiously despised them, would have been unmeaning. Maidens were honourably wed, and wives honoured and children cherished in those wretched Juden-

strassen, where 'the houses look as if they could tell sorrowful stories,' after a fashion quite unknown at any, save the most exceptional, of the numerous coarse, corrupt, and ludicrously consequential little courts which were, at that period, representative of German culture.

The marriage of Heine's parents had been one of those faithful unions, under superficially unequal conditions, for which Jews seem to have a genius. It had been something of the old story, 'she was beautiful, and he fell in love'; she, pretty, piquant, cultivated, and the daughter of a physician of some local standing; he, just a respectable member of a respectable trading family, and ordinary all round, save for the distinction of one rich relative, a banker brother at Hamburg.

Betty's attractions, however, were all dangerous and undesirable possessions in the eyes of a prudent Jewish parent of the period, and Dr. von Geldern appears to have gladly given this charming daughter of his into the safe ownership of her somewhat commonplace wooer, whose chiefest faculty would seem to have been that of appreciation. It proved, nevertheless, a sufficiently happy marriage, and Betty herself, although possibly rather an acquiescent daughter than a responsive bride in the preliminaries, developed into a faithful

wife and a most devoted mother, utilising her artistic tastes and her bright energy in the education of her children, and finding full satisfaction for her warm heart in their affection. Her eldest born was always passionately attached to her, and in the days of his youth, as in the years that so speedily 'drew nigh with no pleasure in them,' unto those latest of the 'evil days' when he lay so unconscionably long a-dying, and wrote long playful letters to her full of tender deceit, telling of health and wealth and friends, in place of pain and poverty and disease, through all that bitter, brilliant life of his, Heinrich Heine's relations with his mother were altogether beautiful, and go far to refute the criticism attributed, with I know not how much of truth, to Goethe, that 'the poet had every capacity save that for love!' 'In real love, as in perfect music,' says Bulwer Lytton in one of his novels, 'there must be a certain duration of time.' Heine's attachment to his mother was just lifelong; his first love he never forgot, nor, indeed, wholly forgave, and his devotion to his grisette wife not only preceded marriage, but survived it. Poor Heine! was it his genius or his race, or something of both, which conferred on him that fatal *pierre de touche* as regards reputation, '*il déplaît invariablement à tous les imbeciles*'?

In the very early boyhood of Heine some

light had broken in on the thick darkness, social and political, which enveloped Jewish fortunes. It was only a fitful gleam from the meteor-like course of the first Napoleon, but during those few years when, as Heine puts it, 'all boundaries were dislocated,' the Duchy of Berg, and its capital Düsseldorf, in common with more important states, were created French, and the Code Napoléon took the place for a while of that other, unwritten, code in which Jews were pariahs, to be condemned without evidence, and sentenced without appeal. Although the French occupation of Berg lasted unluckily but a few years (1806 till 1813), it did wonders in the way of individual civilisation, and Joachim Murat, during his governorship, seems really to have succeeded in introducing something of the 'sweet pineapple odour of politeness,' which Heine later notes as a characteristic of French manners, into the boorish, beerish little German principality. Although the time was all too short, and the conscription too universal for much national improvement to become evident, German burghers as well as German Jews had cause to rejoice in the change of rule. We hear of no 'noble' privileges, no licensed immunities nor immoralities during the term of the French occupation, and some healthier amusements than Jew-baiting were provided for the

populace. With the departure of the French troops the clouds, which needed the storm of the '48 revolution to be effectually dispersed, gathered again. Still the foreign government, short as it was, had lasted long enough to make an impression for life on Heinrich Heine, and its most immediate effect was in the school influences it brought to bear upon him. Throughout all the States brought under French control, public education, by the Imperial edict of 1808, was settled on one broad system, and put under the general direction of the French Minister of Instruction. In accordance with this decree some suitable building in each selected district had to be utilised for class-rooms, the students had to be put into uniform, the teachers to be Frenchmen, and all subjects had to be taught through the medium of that language. The lycée at Düsseldorf was set up in an ancient Franciscan convent, and hither, at the age of ten, was Heine daily despatched. A bright little auburn-haired lad, full of fun and mischief, and mother-taught up to this date save for some small amount of Hebrew drilling which he seems to have received at the hands of a neighbouring Jewish instructor of youth, Harry had everything to learn, and discipline and the Latin declensions were among the first and greatest of his difficulties. Poet nature

and boy nature were both strong in him, and it was so hard to sit droning out long dull lists of words, which he was quite sure the originators of them had never had to do, for 'if the Romans had had first to learn Latin,' he ruminated, 'they never would have had time to conquer the world'—so impossible he found it to keep his eyes on the page, whilst the very motes were dancing in the sunshine as it poured in through the old convent window, which was set just too high in the wall for a safe jump into freedom. One day the need of sympathy, and possibly some unconscious association from the dim old cloister, proved momentarily too strong for the impressionable little lad's Jewish instincts; he came across a crucifix in some forgotten niche of the transformed convent; he looked up, he tells us, at the roughly carved figure, and dropping on his knees, prayed an earnest heterodox prayer, 'Oh, Thou poor once persecuted God, do help me, if possible, to keep the irregular verbs in my head!'

'Jewish instincts,' we said, and they could have been scarcely more, for neither at home, at school, nor in the streets was the atmosphere the boy breathed favourable to the development of religious principles. The Judaism of that age was, superficially, very much what the age had made of it; and its

followers and its persecutors alike combined to render it mightily unattractive to susceptible natures. Samson Heine, stolid and respectable, we may imagine doing his religious, as he did all his other duties and avocations, in solemn routine fashion, laying heavy honest hands on each prose detail, and letting every bit of poetry slip through his fat fingers, whilst his bright eager wife, with her large ideas and her small vanities, ruled her household, and read her Rousseau, and, feeling the outer world shut from her by religion, and the higher world barred from her by ritual, found the whole thing cramping and unsatisfying to the last degree. 'Happy is he whom his mother teacheth' runs an old Talmudic proverb; but among the mother-taught lessons of his childhood, the best was missing to Heinrich Heine—the real difference between 'holy and profane' he never rightly learnt, and thus it came to pass that Jewish instincts—an ineradicable and an inalienable, but alas! an incomplete inheritance of the sons of Israel—were all that Judaism gave to this poet of Jewish race.

One lingers over these early influences, the right understanding of which goes far to supply the key to some of the later puzzles. Oddly enough, the clouds which by and by hid the blue are discernible from the very first,

and these early years give the silver lining to those gathering clouds. In view of the dark days coming one at least rejoices that Heine's childhood was a happy one; at home the merry mischievous boy was quite a hero to his two younger brothers, and a hero and a companion both to his only sister, the Löttchen who was the occasion of his earliest recorded composition. It is a favourite recollection of this lady, who is living still,¹ how she, a blushing little maid of ten, won a good deal of unmerited praise for a school theme, till a trembling confession was extorted from her that the real author was her brother Harry. His mother, too, was exceedingly proud of her handsome eldest son, whose resemblance in many ways to her was the sweetest flattery. And besides the adoring home circle Harry found a great ally for playhours in an old French ex-drummer, who had marched to victory with Napoleon's legions, and who had plenty of tales to tell the boy of the wonderful invincible Kaiser, whom one day—blest never-to-be-forgotten vision—the boy actually saw ride through Düsseldorf on his famous white steed (1810). Heine never quite lost the glamour cast over him in his youth; France, Germany, Judea, each in a sense his *patria*, was each, in the time to come, 'loved both ways,' each in turn

¹ Written in 1882.

mocked at bitterly enough when the mood was on him, but always with France, the 'poet of the nations' as our own English poetess calls her, the sympathies of this cosmopolitan poet were keenest—a perhaps not unnatural state of feeling when we reflect how fact and fiction both combined to produce it. The French occupation of the principality had been a veritable deliverance to its inhabitants, Christian and Jewish alike, and what boy, in his own person, led out of bondage, would not have thrilled to such stories as the old drummer had to tell of the real living hero of it all? And the boy in question, we must bear in mind, was a poet *in posse*.

In school, in spite of the difficulties of irregular verbs, Harry seems to have held his own, and to have soon attracted the especial attention of the director. The chief selected for the lycée at Düsseldorf had happened to be a Roman Catholic abbé of decidedly Voltairian views on most subjects, and attracted by the boy and becoming acquainted with his family, many a talk did Abbé Schallmayer have with Frau Heine over the undoubted gifts and the delightful imperfections of her son. It may possibly have been altogether simple interest in his bright young pupil, or perhaps Frau Heine, pretty still, and charming always, was herself an attraction to the schoolmaster, but

certain it is, whether a private taste for pretty women or a genuine pedagogic enthusiasm prompted his frequent calls, our abbé was a constant visitor at Samson Heine's, and Harry and Harry's future a never-failing theme for conversation. What was the boy to be? There was no room for much speculation if he were to remain a Jew—that path was narrow, if not straight, and admitted of small range of choice along its level line of commerce.

Betty, we know, was no staunch Jewess, and had her small personal ambitions to boot, so such opposition as there was to the abbé's plainly given counsel to make a Catholic of the boy, and give him his chance, came probably from the stolid, steady-going father, to whom custom spoke in echoes resonant enough to deaden the muffled tones of religion. No question, however, of sentiment or sacrifice was permitted to complicate, or elevate, the question; no sense of voluntary renunciation was suggested to the boy; no choice between the life and good, and the death and evil, between conscience and compromise, was presented to him. On the broadly comprehensive grounds that Judaism and trade had been good enough for the father, trade and Judaism must be good enough for the son—the matter was decided.

But still before the lad's prospects could be definitely settled, one important personage

remained to be consulted, the banker at Hamburg, whose wealth had gained him somewhat of the position of a family fetiche. What Uncle Solomon would say to a scheme had no fictitious value about it; for even were the oracle occasionally dumb, not seldom would its speech be silver and its silence gold. A rich uncle is a very solemn possession in an impecunious family, so Harry, and Harry's poetry, and Harry's powers generally, had to be weighed in the Hamburg scales before any standard value could be assigned to either one of them. For three years the balance was held doubtful; the counting-house scales, accurate as they usually were, could hardly adjust themselves to the conditions of an unknown quantity, which 'young Heine' on an office stool must certainly have proved to his bewildered relatives. One imagines him in that correct and cramping atmosphere, fretting as he had done in the old convent school-days against its weary routine, longing with all the half-understood strength of his poet nature for the green hills and the mountain lakes, and feeling absolutely stifled with all the solemn interest shown over sordid matters. He tells us himself of some of his 'calculations' which would wander far afield, and leave the figures on the paper, to concern themselves with the far more perplexing units which passed the

mirky office windows, as he complains, 'at the same hour, with the same mien, making the same motions, like the puppets in a town house clock—reckoning, reckoning always on the basis, twice two are four. Frightful should it ever suddenly occur to one of these people that twice two are properly five, and that he therefore had miscalculated his whole life and squandered it all away in a ghastly error!' Many a poem too, sorrowful or fantastic, as the mood took him, was scribbled in office hours, and very probably on office paper, thence to find a temporary home in the *Hamburg Watchman*. What could be done with such a lad? By every office standard he must inevitably have been found wanting, and one even feels a sort of sympathy with the prosaic head of the house who had made his money by the exercise of such very different talents, and whose notion of poetry corresponded very nearly with Corporal Bunting's notion of love, that it's by no means 'the great thing in life boys and girls want to make it out to be—that one does not eat it, nor drink it, and as for the rest, why, it's bother.' It always was 'bother' to the banker: all through his prosperous life this poet nephew of his, who had the prophetic impertinence to tell the old man once that he owed him some gratitude for being born his uncle, and for bearing his name, was an

unsatisfactory riddle. Original genius of the sort which could create a bank-book *ex nihilo*, the millionaire could have appreciated, but originality which ran into such unproductive channels as poetry-book making was quite beyond him, and that he never read the young man's verses it is needless to say. Even in his own immediate family and for his first book poor Harry found no audience, save his mother; and to the very end of his days Solomon Heine for the life of him could see nothing in his nephew but a *dumme Junge*, who never 'got on,' and who made a jest of most things, even of his wealthy and respectable relatives.

It was scarcely the old man's fault; one can only see to the limits of one's vision, and a poet's soul was not well within Solomon Heine's range. According to his lights he was not ungenerous. That Harry had not the making of a clerk in him, those three probationary years had proved to demonstration, and in the determination at which the banker presently arrived, of giving those indefinite talents which he only understood enough to doubt, a chance of development by paying for a three years' university course at Bonn, he seems to have come fully up to any reasonable ideal of a rich uncle. It is just possible that a secondary motive influenced his generosity, for Harry, besides scribbling, had found a relief from

office work by falling in love with one of the banker's daughters, who would seem not to have shared the family distaste for poetry. The little idyl was of course out of the question in so realistic a circle, and the young lady, to do her justice, seems herself to have been speedily reconverted to the proper principles in which she had been trained. No unfit pendant to the 'Amy, shallow-hearted' with whom a more recent generation is more familiar, this Cousin Amy of poor Heine's married and 'kept her carriage' with all due despatch, whilst he, at college, was essaying to mend his 'heart broken in two' with all the styptics which are as old and, alas, as hurtful as such fractures. Poetical exaggeration notwithstanding—and besides her own especial love-elegy, Amalie Heine, under thin disguises, is the heroine of very many of the love-poems—there is little room for doubt, that if not so seriously injured as he thought, Heine's heart did nevertheless receive a wound, which ached for many and many a long day, from this girl's weak or wilful inconstancy. Heartache is, however, nearly as much a matter-of-course episode in most young people's lives as measles, and the consequences of either malady are only very exceptionally serious.

Heine's youthful disappointment is of chief interest as having indirectly led to what was

really the determining event of his life. When Amalie's parents shrewdly determined on separation as the best course to be pursued with the cousins, and the university plan had been accepted by Harry, his future, which was to date from degree-taking, came on for discussion. Except in an 'other-worldly' sense there was, in truth, but a very limited 'future' possible to Jews of talent. The only open profession was that of medicine, and for that, like the son of Moses Mendelssohn, young Heine had a positive distaste. Commerce, that first and final resource of the race, which had had to satisfy Joseph Mendelssohn, like a good many others equally ill-fitted for it, was not possible to Heine, for he had sufficiently shown, not only dislike, but positive incapacity for business routine. The law suggested itself, as affording an excellent arena for those ready powers of argument and repartee which in the family circle were occasionally embarrassing, and the profession of an advocate, with the vague 'opportunities' it included, when pressed upon young Heine, was not unalluring to him. The immediate future was probably what most occupied his thoughts; the freedom of a university life, the flowing river in place of those bustling streets, shelves full of books exchanged for those dreary office ledgers, youthful comrades in the stead of solemnly irritated old

clerks. Whether the fact that conversion was a condition of most of the delights, an inevitable preliminary of all the benefits of that visionary future; whether the grim truth that 'a certificate of baptism was a necessary card of admission to European culture,' was openly debated and defended, or silently and shamefacedly slurred over in these family councils, does not appear. No record remains to us but the fact that the young student successfully passed his examination in May, 1825; that he was admitted to his degree on July 20, and that between these two dates—to be precise, on the 28th of June—he was baptized as a Protestant with two clergymen for his sponsors. 'Lest I be poor and deny thee' was Agur's prayer, and a wise one; for shivering Poverty, clutching at the drapery of Desire, makes unto herself many a fine, mean, flimsy garment. With no gleam of conviction to cast a flickering halo of enthusiasm over the act, and with no shadow of overwhelming circumstance to somewhat veil it, Heine made his deliberate surrender of conscience to expediency. It was full-grown apostasy, neither conscientious conversion, nor childish drifting into another faith. 'No man's soul is alone,' Ruskin tells us in his uncompromising way, 'Laocoon or Tobit, the serpent has it by the heart or the angel by the hand.' For the rest of his life

Heine was in the grip of the serpent, and that, it seems to us, was the secret of his perpetual unrest. Maimed lives are common enough; blind or deaf, or minus a leg or an arm, or plus innumerable bruises, one yet goes on living, and with the help of time and philosophy sorrow of most sorts grows bearable. Hearts are tough; but the soul is more sensitive to injuries, is, to many of us, the veritable, vulnerable *tendo Achilles* on which our mothers lay their tender, detaining, unavailing hands. Heine sold his soul, and that he never received the price must have perpetually renewed the memory of the bargain. He, one of the 'body-guards of Jehovah,' had suffered himself to be bribed from his post. He never lost his sickening sense of that humiliation; it may be read between the lines, alike of the most brilliant of his prose, of the most tender of his poems, of the most mocking of his often quoted jests.

'They have told thee a-many stories,
And much complaint have made;
And yet my heart's true anguish
That never have they said.

'They shook their heads protesting,
They made a great to-do;
They called me a wicked fellow,
And thou believedst it true.

‘And yet the worst of all things,
Of that they were not aware,
The darkest and the saddest,
That in my heart I bear.’¹

And it was a burden he never laid down; it embittered his relationships and jeopardised his friendships, and set him at variance with himself. ‘I get up in the night and look in the glass and curse myself,’ we find him writing to one of his old Jewish fellow-workers in the New Jerusalem movement (Moser), or checking himself in the course of a violent tirade against converts, in which Börne had joined, to bitterly exclaim, ‘It is ill talking of ropes in the house of one who has been hanged.’ Wherever he treats of Jewish subjects, and the theme seems always to have had for him the fascination which is said to tempt sinners to revisit the scene of their sins, we seem to read remorse between the melodious, mocking lines. Now it is Moses Lump who is laughed at in half tones of envy for his ignorant, unbarterable belief in the virtue of unsnuffed candles; now it is Jehudah Halevi, whose love for the mistress, the *Herzensdame*, ‘whose name was Jerusalem,’ is sung with a sympathy and an intensity impossible to one who had not felt a like passion, and was not

¹ The translation is by the late Amy Levy.

bitterly conscious of having forfeited the right to avow it. The sense of his moral mercenary suicide, in truth, rarely left him. His nature was too conscientious for the strain thus set upon it; his 'wickedness' and 'blackguardism,' such as they were, were often but passionate efforts to throw his old man of the sea, his heavy burden of self-reproach; and his jests sound not unseldom as so many untranslatable cries. He had bargained away his birthright for the hope of a mess of pottage, and the evil taste of the base contract clung to the poor paralysed lips when 'even kissing had no effect upon them.' And but a thin, unsatisfying, and terribly intermittent 'mess,' too, it proved, and the share in it which his uncle, and his uncle's heirs, provided was very bitter in the eating. The story of his struggles, are they not written in the chronicles of the immortals? and his 'monument,' is it not standing yet 'in the new stone premises of his publishers?'¹

His biographers—his niece, the *Princessa della Rocca*, among the latest—have made every incident of Heine's life as familiar as his own books have made his genius to English readers, and Mr. Stigand, following Herr

¹ MESSRS. Campe and Hoffmann erected their new offices during the publication (not too well paid) of the poet's works.

Strodtman, has given us an exhaustive record of the poet's life at home and in exile; in the Germany which was so harsh and in the France which was so tender with him; with the respectable German relatives, who read his books at last and were none the wiser, and with the unlettered French wife, who could not read a single word of them all, and who yet understood her poet by virtue of the love which passeth understanding, and was in this case entirely independent of it. This sketch trenches on no such well-filled ground; it presumes to touch only on the fault which gave to life and genius both that odd pathetic twist, and to glance at the suffering, which, if there be any saving power in anguish, might surely be held by the most self-righteous as some atonement for the 'blackguardism.'

'Oh! not little when pain
Is most quelling, and man
Easily quelled, and the fine
Temper of genius so soon
Thrills at each smart, is the praise
Not to have yielded to pain.'¹

Seven years on the rack is no small test of the heroic temperament; to lie sick and solitary, stretched on a 'mattress grave,' the back bent and twisted, the legs paralysed, the

¹ Matthew Arnold, *Heinrich Heine*.

hands powerless, and with the senses of sight and taste fast failing. At any time within that seven years Heine might well have gained the gold medal in capability of suffering for which, in his whimsical way, he talked of competing, should such a prize be offered at the Paris Exhibition.¹ And the long days, with 'no pleasure in them,' were so drearily many; the silver cord was so slowly loosed, the golden bowl seemed broken on the wheel. His very friends grew tired. 'One must love one's friends with all their failings, but it is a great failing to be ill,' says Madame Sevigné, and, as the years went by, more and more deserted grew the sick-chamber. He never complained; his sweet, ungrudging nature found excuses for desertion and content in loneliness, in the reflection that he was in truth 'unconscionably long a-dying.' 'Never have I seen,' says Lady Duff-Gordon, in her *Recollections of Heine*, and she herself was no mean exemplar of bravely-borne pain, 'never have I seen a man bear such horrible pain and misery in so perfectly unaffected a manner. He neither paraded his anguish, nor tried to conceal it, or to put on any stoical airs. He was pleased to see tears in my eyes, and then at once set to work to make me laugh heartily, which pleased him just as much.'

¹ The Exhibition of 1855.

'Don't tell my wife,' he exclaims one day, when a paroxysm that should have been fatal was not, and the doctor expressed what he meant for a reassuring belief, that it would not hasten the end. 'Don't tell my wife'—we seem to hear that sad little jest, so infinitely sadder than a moan, and our own eyes moisten. Perfectly upright geniuses, when suffering from dyspepsia, have not always shown as much consideration for their perfectly proper wives as does this 'blackguard' Heine, under torture, for his. It is conceivable that under exceptional circumstances a man may contrive to be a hero to his valet, but, unless he be truly heroic, he will not be able to keep up the character to his wife. Heine managed both. Madame Heine is still living,¹ and one may not say much of a love that was truly strong as death, and that the many waters of affliction could not quench. But the valet test, we may hint, was fulfilled; for the old servant who helped to tend him in that terrible illness lives still with Madame Heine, and cries 'for company' when the widow's talk falls, as it falls often, on the days of her youth and her '*pauvre Henri*.' There are traditional records in plenty of his cheerful courage, his patient unselfishness, his unfailing endurance of well-nigh unendurable pain. '*Dieu me pardonnera*,

¹ Written in 1882.

c'est son métier,' the dying lips part to say, still with that sweet, inseparable smile playing about them. Shall man be more just than God? Shall we leave to Him for ever the monopoly of His *métier*?

DANIEL DERONDA AND HIS JEWISH CRITICS

George Eliot and Judaism. An attempt to appreciate *Daniel Deronda*. By Professor DAVID KAUFMANN, of the Jewish Theological Seminary, Buda-Pesth. Translated from the German by J. W. FERRIER, 1877. Edinburgh and London : William Blackwood and Sons.

THE latest echo from the critical chorus which has greeted *Daniel Deronda* comes to us from Germany, in the form of a small book by Dr. Kaufmann, professor in the recently instituted Jewish Theological Seminary at Buda-Pesth. A certain prominence, which its very excellent translation into English confers upon this work, seems to be due less to any special or novel feature in its criticism than to the larger purpose shadowed forth in the title, 'George Eliot and Judaism.' It is avowedly 'an attempt to appreciate *Daniel Deronda*,' and is valuable and interesting to English society not as a critique on the plot or the characters of the book—

on which points it strikes us, in more than one instance, as somewhat weak and one-sided—but as indicating from a Jewish standpoint in how far and how truly modern Judaism is therein represented. Unappreciative as the great mass of the reading public have shown themselves to the latest of George Eliot's novels, the work has excited a considerable amount of curiosity and admiration on the ground of the intimate knowledge its author has evinced of the inner lives and of the little-read literature of the 'Great Unknown of humanity.' We think Dr. Kaufmann goes too far when he says, 'The majority of readers view the world to which they are introduced in *Daniel Deronda* as one foreign, strange, and repulsive. . . . It is not only the Jew of flesh and blood whom men encounter every day upon the streets that they hate, but the Jew under whatever shape he may appear, and even the airy productions of the poet's fancy are denounced when they venture to take that people as their subject' (p. 92). We think this view concedes very much too much to prejudice; but it is undoubtedly a fact that the first serious attempt by a great writer to make Jews and Judaism the central interest of a great work, has produced a certain sense of discord on the public ear, and that criticism has for the most part

run in the minor key. Mr. Swinburne, perhaps, strikes the most distinctly jarring chord, when, in his lately published 'Note on Charlotte Brontë,' he owns to possessing 'no ear for the melodies of a Jew's harp,' and, disclaiming 'a taste for the dissection of dolls,' 'leaves Daniel Deronda to his natural place over the rag-shop door' (pp. 21, 22). Even an ear so politely and elegantly owned defective might be able, it could be imagined, to catch an echo from the 'choir invisible'; and poetic insight, one might almost venture to think, should be able to discern in poetic aspirations, however unfamiliar and even alien to itself, something different from bran. This arrow is too heavily tipped to fly straight to the goal. There are numbers, however, of the like school who, with more excuse than Mr. Algernon Swinburne, fail to 'see anything' in *Daniel Deronda*, and a criticism we once overheard in the Louvre occurs to us as pertinent to this point. The picture was Correggio's 'Marriage of St. Katharine,' and to an Englishman standing near us it evidently did not fulfil preconceived conceptions of a marriage ceremony. He looked at it long, and at last turned disappointed away, audibly muttering, 'Well, I can't see anything in it.' That was evident, but the failure was not in the picture. Preconceived

conceptions count for much, whether the artist be a Correggio or a George Eliot, and ignorance and prejudice are ill-fitting spectacles wherewith to assist vision.

If it be an axiom that a man should be judged by his peers, we should think that George Eliot would herself prefer that her work should be weighed in the balance by those qualified to hold the scales, and should by them, if at all, be pronounced 'wanting.' A book of which Judaism is the acknowledged theme should appeal to Jews for judgment, and thus the question becomes an interesting one to the outer world,—What do the Jews themselves think of *Daniel Deronda*? Are the aspirations of Mordecai regarded by them as the expression of a poet's dream, or a nation's hope? What, in short, is the aspect of modern Judaism to the book?

'Modern' Judaism is itself, perhaps, a convenient rather than a correct figure of speech. There are modern manners to which modern Jews necessarily conform, and which have a tendency to tone down the outward and special characteristics of Judaism, as of everything else, to a general socially-undistinguishable level. But men are not necessarily dumb because they do not speak much or loudly of such very personal matters as their religious hopes and beliefs, more espe-

cially if in these days they are so little in the fashion as to hold strong convictions on such subjects. Our author distinctly formulates the opinion that 'men may give all due allegiance to a foreign State without ceasing to belong to their own people' (p. 21); and in the same sense as we may conceive a man honestly fulfilling all dues as good husband and good father to his living and lawful wife and children, and yet holding tenderly in the unguessed-at depths of memory some long-ago-lost love, so is it conceivable of many an unromantic-looking nineteenth century Jew, who soberly performs all good citizen duties, that the unspoken name of Jerusalem is still enshrined in like unguessed-at depths, as the 'perfection of beauty,' 'the joy of the whole earth.' Conventionalities conduce to silence on such topics, and therefore it is to published rather than to spoken Jewish criticisms we must turn in our inquiry, and the little book under review certainly helps us to a definite answer.

And we may notice, as a significant fact, that while on the part of general critics there has been some differing even in their adverse judgments, and a more than partial failure to grasp the idea of the book, there seems both here and abroad a grateful consensus of Jewish opinion that not only has George Eliot truly depicted the externals of

Jewish *life*, which was a comparatively easy task, but has also correctly represented Jewish thought and the ideas underlying Judaism. Our author emphatically says, '*Daniel Deronda* is a Jewish book, not only in the sense that it treats of Jews, but also in the sense that it is pre-eminently fitted for being understood and appreciated by Jews' (p. 90); and again, 'it will always be gratefully declared,' he concludes, '*that George Eliot has deserved right well of Judaism*' (p. 95). Does this, then, mean that the 'national' idea is a rooted, practical hope? Do English Jews, undistinguishable in the mass from other Englishmen, really and truly hold the desire, like Mordecai, of 'founding a new Jewish polity, grand, simple, just, like the old'? (*Daniel Deronda*, Book iv.) Do they indeed design to devote their 'wealth to redeem the soil from debauched and paupered conquerors,' to cleanse their fair land from 'the hideous obloquy of Christian strife, which the Turk gazes at as at the fighting of wild beasts to which he has lent an arena' (*ibidem*)? Was Daniel's honeymoon-mission to the East to have this practical result? The general Jewish verdict, as we read it, scarcely concedes so much; it sees rather in the closing scene of *Daniel Deronda* the only weak spot in the book. Vague and

visionary as are all honeymoon anticipations, those of Daniel, their beauty and unselfishness notwithstanding, strike Jewish readers as even more unsubstantial, even less likely of realisation, than such imaginings in general. Possibly, as in the old days of the Babylonian exile, 'there be some that dream' of an actual restoration, of a Palestine which should be the Switzerland of Asia Minor, which, crowned with ancient laurels, might sit enthroned in piece and plenty,—

'Dispensing harvest, sowing the To-Be.'

But save with such few and faithful dreamers, memory scarcely blossoms into hope, and hope most certainly has not yet ripened into strong desire. It may come; but at present we apprehend the majority of Jews see the 'future of Judaism' not in the form of a centralised and localised nationality, but rather in the destiny foreshadowed by our author, in which 'Israel will be greatest when she labours under every zone,' when 'her children shall have spread themselves abroad, bearing the ineradicable seeds of eternal truth' (pp. 86, 87). This conception of 'nationality' would point rather to a spiritual than to a temporal sovereignty, to a supremacy of mind rather than of matter, and appears to be in accord with the tone per-

vading both ancient and modern Jewish literature, which exhibits Judaism as a perpetual living force, maintained from within rather than from without, and destined continually to influence religious thought, and to survive all dispensations.

In his undefined mission to the East Deronda is, therefore, to that extent perhaps, out of harmony with the general tone of modern Jewish thought. We at least are constrained to think that more Jews of the present day would be ready to follow Mordecai in imagination than Deronda in person to Judæa. It is, nevertheless, in strict artistic unity that, shut out for five-and-twenty years from actual practical knowledge of his people, Deronda should represent the *ideal* rather than the *idea* of Judaism. Mordecai, sketched as he is supposed to be from the life, with his deep poetic yearnings, which are stayed on the threshold of action, strikes us as a truer and more typical figure than Deronda hastening to their fulfilment. And on the subject of these same vague yearnings another point suggests itself. We have heard it said that the religious belief of Mordecai centres rather in the destiny of his race than in the Being who has appointed that destiny, and we have heard it questioned whether the theism of Mordecai is sufficiently defined to be fairly

representative of Jewish thought, or if Judaism indeed is also passing under that wave of Pantheism which, like the waters of old, is threatening to submerge all ancient landmarks, and to leave visible only 'the tops of the mountains' of revealed religion. This seems a criticism based rather on negative than on positive evidence, and derived possibly from the obvious leanings of George Eliot's other writings, and it is, perhaps, somewhat unfair to assume that, even if, on this point, she does not sympathise with the Jews, she has any intention of colouring her picture of modern Judaism with intellectual prepossessions of her own. In the silence of Mordecai with respect to his beliefs, he represents the great body of Jews, whose religion finds expression rather in action than in formula, and who are slow to indulge in theological speculations. Mordecai was true to Jewish characteristics in the fact that his belief was concealed beneath his hopes and aspirations, but had he in any degree shared the views of the new school of sceptics, he could not have been the typical Jew, who sees in the unity of his people a symbol of the unity of his God.

The pure theism of Judaism may be said to have its poles in the anthropomorphic utterances of some of the Rabbinical writers,

and in the present pantheism of the extreme German school ; but we should say that the ordinary, the representative Jewish thought of the day lies between these two extremes, and, in so far as it gives expression to any belief on the subject, distinctly recognises a personal God presiding over human destiny and natural laws. There may be here and there an inquiring spirit that wanders so far afield that his attraction towards his people is lost, and with it the influence his genius should exert ; but Jewish thought, if owning a somewhat nebulous conception of the Deity, slowly progressing towards one fuller and grander, cannot be said to be drifting towards Pantheism. Judaism, unlike many other faiths, has not a history and a religious belief apart,—the one not only includes and supplements, but is actually non-existent, ‘unthinkable,’ without the other. Thus to have made an earnest Jew, with the strong racial instinct of Mordecai, a weak theist, would have been an inartistic conception, and Jewish criticism has not discovered this flaw in George Eliot’s exceptional but faithful Jewish portraiture. Judging, then, from such sources as are open to us, we are led to infer that the feeling of nationality is still deeply rooted in the Jewish race, and that the religious feeling from which it is inseparable perhaps gives it

the strength and depth to exist and to continue to exist without the external props of 'a local habitation and a name.' Dr. Kaufmann, therefore, very well expresses what appears to be the general conviction of his co-religionists, when he suggests that 'in the very circumstance of dispersion may lie fulfilment' (p. 87).

MANASSEH BEN ISRAEL

PRINTER AND PATRIOT

WHEN the prophet of the Hebrews, some six-and-twenty hundred years ago, thundered forth his stirring 'Go through! go through the gates! prepare a way, lift up a standard for the people!' it may, without irreverence, be doubted if he foresaw how literally his charge would be fulfilled by one of his own race in the seventeenth century of the Christian era. The story of how it was done may perhaps be worth retelling, since many subjects of lesser moment have found more chroniclers.

It was in 1290 that gates, which in England had long been ominously creaking on their hinges, were deliberately swung-to, and bolted and barred by Church and State on the unhappy Jews, who on that bleak November day stood shivering along the coast. 'Thy waves and thy billows have passed over me' must have lost in tender allegory and gained some added force of literalness that wintry afternoon. Scarce any of the

descendants of that exodus can have had share in the return. Of such of the refugees as reached the opposite ports few found foothold, and fewer still asylum. The most, and perhaps they were the most fortunate of the fifteen thousand, were quick in gaining foreign graves. Those who made for the nearest neighbouring shores of France, forgetful, or perhaps ignorant, of the recent experiences of their French brethren under Philip Augustus, lived on to earn a like knowledge for themselves, and to undergo, a few years later, another expulsion under Philip the Fair. Those who went farther fared worse, for over the German States the Imperial eagle of Rome no longer brooded, now to protect and now to prey on its victims; the struggle between the free cities and the multitudinous petty princelings was working to its climax, and whether at bitter strife, or whether pausing for a brief while to recruit their powers, landgrave and burgher, on one subject, were always of one mind. To plunder at need or to persecute at leisure, Jews were held to be handy and fair game for either side.

Far northward or far southward that ragged English mob were hardly fit to travel. Some remnant, perhaps, made effort to reach the semi-barbarous settlements in Russia and Poland, but few can have been sanguine

enough to set out for distant Spain in hope of a welcome but rarely accorded to such very poor relations. And even in the Peninsula the security which Jews had hitherto experienced had by this date received several severe shocks. Two centuries later and the tide of civilisation had rolled definitely and drearily back on the soil which Jews had largely helped to cultivate, and left it bare, and yet a little longer, Portugal, become a province of Spain, had followed the cruel fashions of its suzerain.

By the close of the sixteenth century a settlement of the dispossessed Spanish and Portuguese Jews had been formed in Holland, and Amsterdam was growing into a strange Dutch likeness of a new Jerusalem, for Holland alone among the nations at this period gave a welcome to all citizens in the spirit of Virgil's famous line, '*Tros Rutulusve fuat, nullo discrimine habebo.*' And the refugees, who at this date claimed the hospitality of the States, were of a sort to make the Dutch in love with their own unfashionable virtue of religious tolerance. Under Moorish sway, for centuries, commerce had been but one of the pursuits open to the Jews and followed by the Jews of the Peninsula, and thus it was a crowd, not of financiers and traders only or chiefly, but of cultivated scholars, physicians, statesmen, and land-owners, whom Catholic bigotry had

exiled. The thin disguise of new Christians was soon thrown off by these Jews, and they became to real Christians, to such men as Vossius and Caspar Barlæus, who welcomed them and made friends of them, a revelation of Judaism.

It was after the great *auto-da-fé* of January 1605, that Joseph ben Israel, with a host of other Jews, broken in health and broken in fortune, left the land which bigotry and persecution had made hideous to them, and joined the peaceful and prosperous settlement in Amsterdam. The youngest of Ben Israel's transplanted family was the year-old Manasseh, who had been born in Lisbon a few months before their flight. He seems to have been from the first a promising and intelligent lad, and his tutor, one Isaac Uziel, who was a minister of the congregation, and a somewhat famous mathematician and physician to boot, formed a high opinion of the boy's abilities. He did not, however, live to see them verified; when Manasseh was but eighteen the Rabbi died, and his clever pupil was thought worthy to be appointed to the vacated office. It was an honoured and an honourable, but scarcely a lucrative, post to which Manasseh thus succeeded, and the problem of living soon became further complicated by an early marriage and a young family. Manasseh had to cast about him for supplementary means of support, and

he presently found it in the establishment of a printing press. Whether the type gave impetus to the pen, or whether the pen had inspired the idea of the press, is hard to decide; but it is, at least, certain that before he was twenty-five, Manasseh had found congenial work and plenty of it. He taught and he preached, and both in the school-room and in the pulpit he was useful and effective, but it was in his library that he felt really happy and at home. Manasseh was a born scholar and an omnivorous reader, bound to develop into a prolific, if not a profound, writer. The work which first established his fame bears traces of this, and is, in point of fact, less of a composition than a compilation. The first part of this book, *The Conciliator*, was published in 1632, after five years' labour had been expended on it, and it is computed to contain quotations from, or references to, over 200 Hebrew, and 50 Latin and Greek authors. Its object was to harmonise (*conciliador*) conflicting passages in the Pentateuch, and it was written in Spanish, although it could have been composed with equal facility in any one of half-a-dozen other languages, for Manasseh was a most accomplished linguist.

Although not the first book which was issued from his press, for a completely edited prayer-book and a Hebrew grammar had been

published in 1627, *The Conciliator* was the first work that attracted the attention of the learned world to the Amsterdam Rabbi. Manasseh had the advantage of literary connections of his own, through his wife, who was a great-granddaughter of Abarbanel — that same Isaac Abarbanel, the scholar and patriot, who in 1490 headed the deputation to Ferdinand and Isabella, which was so dramatically cut short by Torquemada.

Like *The Conciliator*, all Manasseh's subsequent literary ventures met with ready appreciation, but with more appreciation, it would seem, than solid result, for his means appear to have been always insufficient for his modest wants, and in 1640 we find him seriously contemplating emigration to Brazil on a trading venture. Two members of his congregation, which, as a body, does not seem to have acted liberally towards him, came forward, however, at this crisis in his affairs, and conferred a benefit all round by establishing a college and appointing Manasseh the principal, with an adequate salary. This ready use of some portion of their wealth has made the brothers Pereira more distinguished than for its possession. Still, it must not be inferred that Manasseh had been, up to this date, a friendless, if a somewhat impecunious, student, only that, as is rather perhaps the wont of poor prophets

in their own country, his admirers had had to come from the outer before they reached the inner circle. He had certainly achieved a European celebrity in the Republic of letters before his friends at Amsterdam had discovered much more than the fact that he printed very superior prayer-books. He had won over, amongst others, the prejudiced author of the *Law of Nations*, to own him, a Jew, for a familiar friend, before some of the wealthier heads of his own congregation had claimed a like privilege ; and Grotius, then Swedish ambassador at Paris, was actually writing to him, and proffering friendly services, at the very time that the Amsterdam congregation were calmly receiving his enforced farewells. There was something, perhaps, of irony in the situation, but Manasseh, like Maimonides, had no littleness of disposition, no inflammable self-love quick to take fire ; he loved his people truly enough to understand them and to make allowances, had even, perhaps, some humorous perception of the national obtuseness to native talent when unarrayed in purple and fine linen, or until duly recognised by the wearers of such.

Set free, by the liberality of Abraham and Isaac Pereira, from the pressure of everyday cares, Manasseh again devoted himself to his books, and turned out a succession of treatises.

History, Philosophy, Theology, he attacked them all in turn, and there is, perhaps, something besides rapidity of execution which suggests an idea of manufacture in most of these works. A treatise which he published about 1650, and which attracted very wide notice, significantly illustrated his rather fatal facility for ready writing. The treatise was entitled *The Hope of Israel*, and sought to prove no less than that some aborigines in America, whose very existence was doubtful, were lineal descendants of the lost ten tribes. The Hope itself seems to have rested on no more solid foundation than a traveller's tale of savages met with in the wilds, who included something that sounded like the שמע (Shemang¹) in their vernacular. The story was quickly translated into several languages, but it was almost as quickly disproved, and Manasseh's deductions from it were subsequently rather roughly criticised. Truth to say, the accumulated stores of his mind were ground down and sifted and sown broadcast in somewhat careless and indigestible masses, and their general character gives an uncomfortable impression of machine-work rather than of hand-work. And the proportion of what he wrote was as nothing compared to what he contemplated writing. Perhaps those never-written books of

¹ Short declaration of belief in Unity (Deut. vi. 4).